

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SAJ-01 MBFR-03 ACDA-19 PM-07 NSC-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6899

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T BONN 11762

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, FR, GW

SUBJECT: FRG VIEWS ON FRENCH DEFENSE POLICY

REF: PARIS 21463

1. FRG DEFENSE AND FONOFF OFFICIALS ARE WATCHING CLOSELY THE CURRENT RE-EXAMINATION OF DEFENSE POLICY UNDERWAY IN PARIS, BUT THEY ARE SKEPTICAL WHETHER IT WILL PRODUCE MUCH WHICH WILL BENEFIT COMMON WESTERN DEFENSE INTERESTS. GENERALLY SPEAKING, FRG OFFICIALS CONSIDER TWO DEVELOPMENTS HAVE AWAKENED PARIS TO THE NEED FOR SOME KIND OF NEW RESPONSES IN THE DEFENSE POLICY FIELD. THE FRENCH, THEY THINK, ARE NOW MUCH LESS CERTAIN ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR CONTINUED US COMMITMENT TO DEFEND EUROPE, GIVEN THE GROWTH OF CONGRESSIONAL INSISTANCE ON REDUCING US TROOP LEVELS HERE. IN ADDITION, FRG OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT PARIS IS CONVINCED, IN A WAY

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IT WAS NOT PREVIOUSLY, ABOUT THE CHANCES OF US-SOVIET

COLLUSION ON MATTERS OF VITAL EUROPEAN INTERESTS. THE US-SOVIET AGREEMENT TO PREVENT NUCLEAR WAR DECISIVELY INFLUENCED THE FRENCH IN THIS REGARD. FINALLY, THESE OFFICIALS THINK THE FRENCH NOW RECOGNIZE MORE CLEARLY THAT CURRENT DEFENSE POLICY WILL DEPRIVE FRENCH INDUSTRY FROM LARGER AND MORE IMPORTANT PRODUCTION PROGRAMS WHICH WILL DEVELOP IN THE EUROGROUP CONTEXT IN THE NEXT DECADE.

2. OUR CONTACTS ARE UNABLE, HOWEVER, TO GO BEYOND THIS BRIEF OUTLINE OF FACTS INTO A MORE GENERALIZED VIEW ABOUT WHAT THE RE-EXAMINATION MAY PRODUCE. THEY THINK THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION IN FRANCE MAKES IMPROBABLE ANY IMPORTANT CHANGES IN DEFENSE POLICY AND THAT PARIS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO FIND OTHER FORMS OF DEFENSE COOPERATION OUTSIDE OF THE NATO FRAMEWORK SATISFACTORY TO OTHER ALLIANCE MEMBERS. HERE, OF COURSE, THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR FRENCH-FRG MISUNDERSTANDINGS TO ARISE. THE FRG WOULD NOT WANT TO EMBRACE ANY FRENCH PROPOSAL WHICH MIGHT DISTURB THE LINKAGE BETWEEN EUROPEAN NATO FORCES AND THE US STRATEGIC DETERRENT. THE GERMANS WOULD NOT, FOR INSTANCE, WANT TO SEE AN ANGLO-FRENCH NUCLEAR FORCE DEVELOPED IF SUCH A STEP WOULD AFFECT THE CREDIBILITY OF THE US NUCLEAR UMBRELLA. IN ADDITION, THE FRG WOULD NOT WANT TO SHIFT ANY EUROGROUP ACTIVITIES INTO A WEU FRAMEWORK; SUCH A MOVE WOULD WEAKEN A USEFUL EUROPEAN PROGRAM OF DEFENSE COOPERATION WHICH THE GERMANS BELIEVE HAS MUCH POTENTIAL FOR THE FUTURE. EVEN IN THE MATTER OF BURDEN SHARING GERMAN OFFICIALS ARE NOW BECOMING SKEPTICAL THAT THE FRENCH, DESPITE JOBERT'S REMARKS LAST MONTH IN BONN, MAY BE WILLING TO ASSIST IN A MULTILATERAL BURDEN SHARING ARRANGEMENT.

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